

Gabriola Island ...defined by nature...cherished by a thriving community.

A TARGETTED FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILING GABRIOLA'S ECOLOGICAL BALANCE WITH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT – 2025 to 2050

INTRODUCTION

This framework aims to serve as a backdrop to the review of Gabriola's Official Community Plan. It does not purport to be fully comprehensive in suggesting goals and associated initiatives but strives to further thought and deliberation about Gabriola's future.

POSSIBLE OCP GOALS

1. Nurture land and seascapes

- 1.1 Identify the underlying causes of ecological degradation and loss.
- 1.2 Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use.
- 1.3 Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2. Cultivate community wellbeing

- 2.1 Nurture Gabriola's rich heritage, distinctive 'islander' character, and socio-cultural diversity.
- 2.2 Facilitate on-island health and socio-economic delivery and support services.

3. Govern effectively

- 3.1 Foster effective community decision-making participation
- 3.2 Establish and monitor realistic, achievable, and measurable success targets for effective governance.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

Nurture land and seascapes.

1.1 Identify the underlying causes of ecological degradation and loss.

Possible Targets

- 1.1.1 An ongoing island-wide biodiversity inventory and mapping system is maintained.
- 1.1.2 The degree of marine deterioration, threatened aquatic resources and vulnerable ecosystems in Gabriola waters and the Salish sea are identified.
- 1.1.3 A natural diversity quality target plan is regularly updated.
- 1.1.4 Invasive alien species are identified, and priority control and eradication measures are established and monitored on an annual basis.
- 1.1.5 A comprehensive groundwater quality analysis is conducted at least every five years

1.2 Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use.

Possible Targets

- 1.2.1 Areas of particular importance to biodiversity are identified and protected.
- 1.2.2 The status of threatened indigenous natural species is improved.
- 1.2.3 There is no unsustainable harvesting of biological resources.
- 1.2.4 Wetlands and watercourses on any land subject to subdivision, density adjustment, or zoning change, are designated as public park, or covenanted as Natural Heritage Area.
- 1.2.5 Minimum targets of Gabriola generated pollution with detrimental impact on ecosystem functions- including land, air, and water effects- are identified and monitored.
- 1.2.6 Adaptive and protective measures are identified and established to address the pressure of climate change on the land and marine ecosystems on and around Gabriola to maintain their integrity and healthy functioning.
- 1.2.7 Gabriola has secured a “License of Occupation” for those island bays that deserve water or rehabilitation or protective management of adjacent land*
**Note: <https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/136982/>*

1.3 Positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied.

Possible Targets

- 1.3.2 There are standards for sustainable management of forestry, farming and aquaculture.
- 1.3.3 Strategies are developed and implemented to enhance socio-economically valuable species of selected wild species of plants and animals.
- 1.3.4 Natural runoff water is captured for ecosystem enhancement or community use.
- 1.3.5 Community waste is recycled for local applications.

Nurture community wellbeing

2.1 Nurture Gabriola’s rich heritage, distinctive ‘islander’ character, and socio-cultural diversity.

Possible Targets

- 2.1.1 Gabriola’s status as a uniquely endowed socio-economic entity is celebrated, maintained and nurtured.
- 2.1.2 First Nations’ physical heritage is recognized and celebrated.
- 2.1.3 First Nations engagement is fully aligned with all Gabriola affairs.
- 2.1.4 First Nations traditional knowledge and practices effectively contribute to the community.

- 2.1.5 Gabriolans are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.
- 2.1.6 Organisations that further Gabriola's distinction as a unique artisan and musically spirited community are supported.
- 2.1.7 Noise regulations and restrictions on aerial traffic safeguard the island's tranquility.
- 2.1.8 Visitors to the island respect local concerns for biodiversity intrusion

2.2 Facilitate on-island health and socio-economic delivery and support services.

Possible Targets

- 2.2.1 It is identified where loss and degradation of natural habitats could be reduced or eliminated through land use planning, possible use of degraded land for agricultural production, improved ecosystem connectivity and enhanced mechanisms for natural resource governance combined with recognition of the economic and social value of ecosystem services provided by natural habitats.
- 2.2.2 Innovative design features and servicing standards as a means of improving land use efficiency and providing affordable housing are highlighted in development proposals.
- 2.2.3 A community supported neighbourhood 'function' and growth plan guides zoning and land-use considerations.
- 2.2.4 The public road system for motorized traffic is upgraded but not expanded.
- 2.2.5 Not-for-profit groups and other third parties that facilitate housing for low-income households are supported.
- 2.2.6 A relevant building code governs on-island construction.
- 2.2.7 Biological resources that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, are nurtured and maintained.
- 2.2.8 Locally provided products and services are awarded suitable quality/ reliability "made on Gabriola" seals.
- 2.2.9 A "certification" system identifies Gabriola products that are provided under "green" and sustainable practices.
- 2.2.10 A program to prevent wildfires is regularly reviewed in cooperation with the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department.
- 2.2.11 By 2030 ecosystems are safeguarded and equitably accessible, providing essential services or contribute to the health, livelihood, and well-being of the full spectrum of the Gabriola community – including First Nations, the poor, and the vulnerable.

Govern effectively.

3.1 Foster effective community decision-making participation

Possible targets

- 3.1.1 The Gabriola community is committed to the caretaking of its ecosystems through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity-building.
- 3.1.2 Gabriolans are aware of the value of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.
- 3.1.3 The Gabriola community is aware of the relevance of ecosystem resilience and its contribution to carbon sheltering, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 3.1.4 An evolving community supported neighbourhood 'function' and growth plan guides zoning and land-use considerations.
- 3.1.5 Every rezoning, land use and subdivision project is available for public review and is accompanied by a prescribed environmental assessment.
- 3.1.6 The on-island "trading" of biodiversity retention commitments is facilitated.
- 3.1.7 Every land use and zoning bylaw is explicitly endorsed by the Gabriola community.
- 3.1.8 Bylaws are comprehensively and clearly documented and swiftly and strictly enforced.
- 3.1.9 Gabriola's vision strategies are reconsidered and updated as deemed appropriate once every five years.
- 3.1.10 To stimulate community interest and participation the public meetings of the Trust are structured to be informative, engaging, and non-bureaucratic.
- 3.1.11 A locally elected Trust of at least seven Gabriola residents provides comprehensive oversight of all those functions that typically reside under municipal governance in British Columbia- i.e. including all functions currently assigned to the RDN and MOTI.
- 3.1.12 It is regularly assessed what public functions and services are best addressed locally rather than left to, or "contracted out" to, off-island (government +) entities.
- 3.1.13 Close association and an effective and mutually supportive relationship is maintained with the Gulf Islands Trust.
- 3.1.14 At least twice annually the Trust convenes a public meeting seeking community involvement in policy initiatives and assessments, that is suitably designed to attract an audience of least 15% of the Gabriola citizenship.

3.2 Establish and monitor realistic, achievable, and measurable success targets.

Possible Targets

3.2.1 By 2030, policies are finalized that inform development, stewardship actions, climate change resiliency, environmental studies, and conservation efforts*.

**Note: https://www.nation.on.ca/sites/default/files/FAQ%20-%20Natural%20Heritage%20Study%20-%20November%202020_0.pdf*

3.2.2 By 2030 systems are in place to protect traditional knowledge, innovations and indigenous practices, and their customary sustainable use of biodiversity are respected, preserved, and maintained.

3.2.3 By 2035 at least 60% of terrestrial, inland-water and 25% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity, are conserved through comprehensive, ecologically representative, and well-connected systems of effectively managed protected areas and other means and integrated into the wider land and seascape*- 40% of Gabriola will be designated as public park or reserve** while 20% will be conserved by private property commitment.

**Terrestrial protected areas (% of total land area) in Seychelles was 61.52 as of 2021; Marine protected areas (% of territorial waters) in Australia and the UK was 44% as of 2021. Terrestrial protected areas are totally or partially protected areas of at least 1,000 hectares that are designated by national authorities as scientific reserves with limited public access, national parks, natural monuments, nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries, protected landscapes, and areas managed mainly for sustainable use.*

***Countries with the highest relative proportions of their respective land areas being set aside as terrestrial, protected, nature reserves: New Caledonia 61%; Slovenia 54%; Brunei 44%; Hongkong 42%.*

3.2.4 30% of any area to be subdivided or to be assigned added density is either designated as parkland or covenanted as 'Natural Heritage Area'*.

**Note: https://www.nation.on.ca/sites/default/files/FAQ%20-%20Natural%20Heritage%20Study%20-%20November%202020_0.pdf*

3.2.5 By 2035, no Gabriola household spends more than 30% of income towards basic housing*

** A Gabriola household is defined as a household that includes at least one individual who is either employed on Gabriola or has lived on Gabriola for a minimum of 5 years and has insufficient assets that could reasonably be monetized to contribute to satisfying the income criterion.*

3.2.6 By 2030 - to preserve Gabriola's crucial groundwater biodiversity- no more water wells are activated; unused wells are decommissioned; and 90% of all domestic and industrial water needs are satisfied through roof catchment and cistern storage and by 2035 no additional non catchment water is designated for agricultural use.

3.2.7 By 2035 the extinction and decline of known threatened species has been prevented and improvement in the conservation status [for at least 50% of those that are land based] has been achieved.

3.2.8 By 2035, privately owned forests are managed in accordance with FSC guidelines*

**Note: <https://ca.fsc.org/ca-en>*

3.2.9 All Vision related Targets are assessed annually.

3.2.10 By 2030, a public meeting is convened annually with every relevant local organisation that is committed to address biodiversity and sustainability, to confirm common objectives, evaluate progress and establish shared action plans.

Ewout van Dishoeck

With critical help from Nancy Hetherington-Peirce

February 2024